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The Negro Music Journal

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THE NEGRO MUSIC JOURNAL

J. HILLARY TAYLOR, Editor,

111 D Street, Southeast,

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Washington, D. C.



THE pleasure which the work of a musician affords you is his very life-blood ; the trouble it has cost him you do not know. He gives you his very best—the essence of his life, the outflow of his genius ; and yet you grudge him a simple wreath of flowers.—SCHUMANN.





The
Negro Music Journal



A Monthly, devoted to the Educational Interest of the Negro in Music.

VOL. I.

WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY, 1903.

NO. 9.

CLASSIFICATION OF VOICES.

Frank S. Thompson.

YOUNG teachers of the voice beg for advice which tells them how to locate correctly the voices which come to them for training. They understand that the first thing for them to decide is the proper location of the voice in its scale of natural location. Almost the first question asked the teacher is, "What is my voice?" How can the teacher satisfy the applicant? Upon the answer depends, very often, the first impression of the student. If the teacher evinces definite knowledge and positiveness upon the first question that confidence in the teacher, so necessary to success, is at once established. It is a question that must not be avoided. Nor should the answer be given, as it sometime is, "After you have had eight or ten lessons of me I will tell you what your voice is." That answer leaves the applicant to think the teacher is an experimenter. Still less should the teacher reply, "I cannot tell you what kind your voice is until you have worked in my method. You have studied as a contralto (or soprano, as the case may be) but in my method your voice may take a different place." This answer is often given and is not only confession of ignorance but admission of bigotry and slavishness to a method.

Each sex has three kinds of voices. Males are basses, baritones

and tenors ; females, contraltos, mezzo-sopranos and sopranos. Distinguishing features are location of registers, range, quality, power and flexibility. These are regulated by physical structure and action of the parts which form the vocal apparatus.

The bass voice is the lowest of the male classes. (Sometimes in ignorance people speak of women having bass voices. Never. At a reception recently, the writer was talking with a society young lady. A man with a fine baritone voice had just been singing. The young lady asked, "What would you call his voice? A contralto, is it not?") The bass voice surpasses in volume and power, but is often lacking in sweetness or even richness. Its usual compass is from low D, about two octaves, to D at the middle of the keyboard of the pianoforte. At the note A, in the upper octave of these two a slight change in sound (as to quality and power) can be detected. If a man applies for lessons who has this range and the little change at A, with robust tones, he is very sure to have a bass voice. (The writer suspects that in basses there is another change in the lower octave at E or F, but as no authority has ever announced a register lower than that commonly known as the chest voice, he hesitates to assert that there is such a change.)

The next class among males is the baritone. This seems to be the normal male voice in our country. It has most compass, flexibility among men. Not quite so low in location as in the bass voice. It rarely extends below F, is but two octaves in length (or one or two semi-tones more) and has a slight change in the upper octave, about Bb. The location of that change is a most important factor in determining the difference between basses and baritones. It might even be as high as B. Tenors sometimes make it at B, but the baritone voice differs from the tenor in power and quality, and these attributes enter as secondary considerations in determination.

The tenor voice enters the third class among males. Its characteristics are smoothness (important), delicacy and tenderness. Its range is from A, fully two octaves, to upper A. (It has great elasticity, and the compass during development often reaches C or D, but in the classification which we are making we are considering crude voice.) The change in the tenor which corresponds with that found in the other male voices is on C or C-sharp. Sometimes on B.

The arrangement among women corresponds with that among men but the voices are pitched an octave higher. Details given above, if fixed in mind well, prepare the reader to understand how to locate the voices of applicants for lessons among ladies. If young teachers can examine many male voices they will learn easily how to distinguish between them and know better how to judge those of women. Differences are most apparent in men, and it is wise for a young teacher to induce all her male acquaintances to let her examine their voices for experience. Friends will readily permit examination to an enthusiastic teacher.

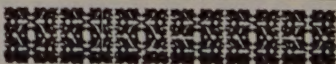
Contralto voices are lowest among women. (The terms contralto and alto, when the latter is applied to women singers, are used interchangeably.) This voice begins generally at F (the first F below the middle of the keyboard of the pianoforte) and extends to about F, two octaves. Its characteristics are richness and fullness. Under cultivation it grows very round and noble. It has a slight change in the middle of the voice (this, in ladies' voices, is the change from lower to upper medium voice) A-flat or A.


Mezzo-soprano means "lower soprano," and has characteristics of the contralto and soprano. Of the former, in richness of quality; in the latter in range and elasticity. It begins at about A and reaches about high C. Its change in the medium voice is on B-flat and B. This voice, highly developed, gives the much coveted dramatic soprano voice. Nearly all the great singers of the world have had natural mezzo-soprano voices. Many trained the nature of the contralto out of them and would resent the statement that they were naturally mezzo-sopranos. This voice, and the baritone among men, preserve longest their compass, power and fine quality. Instances might be cited of professional singers who preserved their fine voices till passed seventy years of age. Most of them have been mezzo-sopranos and baritones.

Sopranos are the highest and lightest voices. In nature they are not very common, although the majority of ladies call themselves sopranos. The range is from C at the middle of the keyboard to E or F above high C. The characteristics are lightness, flexibility, silvery ring, and brightness. Under training this voice becomes able in music to imitate almost everything among the mechanical


things of nature from sighing of the breeze to crash and crackle of of thunder and these possibilities strike an examiner of voice intuitively. The change in the medium voice occurs at C or C-sharp.

The peculiarities of voices depend entirely upon the size and texture of the different parts of the body which enter directly into singing. It is to be assumed that none of these parts is deformed. But so rare is actual deformity that that matter can be dropped and the vocal teacher may feel certain that every one who applies for lessons has, so far as physical requirements are concerned, all that is necessary to make a singer. Some applicants will be more favored than are others but with proper physical drill a singer can be made out of the majority of persons, and everyone, favored or not, can greatly improve. The best singers have large, well-developed chests, lungs well-proportioned, neck of medium length, thyroid gland of good size but not unnaturally enlarged, larynx above average size, healthful elastic pharynx, soft palate thin and pliable, high arch in front of mouth, jaw not protruding, elastic cheeks and expressive eyes. Nearly all these good conditions are obtainable and those who have most of them in good form when they commence study produce results quickly. Students not so gifted by heredity require more time for development, but all can be developed if sufficient time be allowed. The basis of correct vocal method lies in preparation and growth of these desirable physical attributes. A recent writer uses the terms, "that branch of physical drill known as voice culture" and it is well for vocal teachers to bear in mind that singing is founded upon physical drill. That makes teaching more tangible and definite and removes in large measure the necessity for "gush" and unnatural enthusiasm which so many employ. Anything which aids teachers to be practical is an added tool in the work-box. Becoming a good teacher requires time and experience in the use of tools. First get the tools and learn how to use them.—
THE MUSICIAN.





Piano Department



Conducted by MR. J. HILLARY TAYLOR

Under this heading we desire to give teachers a medium through which they can exchange ideas upon piano teaching and study. Instructive articles that would help teachers and students to a better knowledge and practice of their art, are solicited, from all sources. Questions are welcomed. Write us, giving others suggestions, or asking for assistance.

THE POWER OF MUSIC TO ELEVATE INTELLECTUALLY.

"The study of the masterworks in music is as productive of mental culture as equivalent application is to the study of general literature or science : a different kind of culture, but none the less, real culture, for all that."—W. FRANCIS GATES.

ALL educational authorities agree that the study of mathematics is excellent for the development of every student's mind. There is another study that is equally good as a mind strengthener and stimulus :—this is, the proper, systematic and logical study of *Music!*

How many people, outside of a few earnest teachers and students, realize the wonderful power that lies within the art of music to elevate one intellectually? The general opinion is that music serves only as an amusement :—merely a concordance of pleasing and tinkling sounds.

The progress music has made within the last few years as being a necessary factor in the educational system of our public schools is gradually helping to disprove this said opinion ; but even in the public schools of most cities, it is looked upon in the lighter vein, hence does not accomplish the good it should.

To begin correctly the study of music improves one morally :—which is but saying it improves one intellectually : for whatever

helps one morally, prepares the mind, heart and soul to advance intellectually.

Music will immediately begin to improve those who will study it thoughtfully and diligently—by training the hand, eye and ear; refining the heart, mind and soul; teaching order, patience, perseverance and punctuality; enabling one to receive and give joy, culture and knowledge to others; and finally, to ever lift our thoughts and souls to those regions wherein will be found the culmination and perfection of this beautiful and Godly art.

The hand that is trained in the handling of the pencil and motion of the brush in painting, is given exercise in the playing of scales, chords, trills, arpeggios, and in fact, in the general technical side of *all* musical interpretation. Some might say, "What has all this to do with the intellect?" It has all to do with it, as it is impossible to undergo these various and complex motions, with the hand, without the same being prompted and guided by the intellect. The eye that can search the picture, the statue, and admires a beautiful piece of architecture—thus transmitting to the mind their effects, proportions and symmetry, can also give motion to the hand by seeing the many symbols upon the score and transmit them to the ear. Thus, the intellect is effected and forth come strains that move the very depths of our souls.

The student must learn order if he would know Music, for she demands it in scale and chord playing also in the manipulation of the pedals. The doors of the masters' musical heaven are closed to the student who will not persevere. Music is a difficult and many-sided art that demands the closest application, even for years, in order to be able to interpret correctly her varied meanings as expressed in her different schools—the German, Polish, Russian, Italian, etc.

The manner in which music has been practised and cherished in the different churches from times unknown, proves her wonderful power over the minds and intellects of her auditors.

If we could step back to the Grecian times, we would find this beautiful art practiced in many capacities in the Greeks' daily lives. Plato says: "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, charm to sadness, gaiety and life to everything. It is the essence of order and leads to all that is good, just,

and beautiful, of which it is the invisible, but nevertheless, dazzling, passionate and eternal form."

In the study of rhythm, harmony, counterpoint and musical acoustics we enter upon material calculated to be as strong and valuable a mind developer as the study of mathematics and physics.



WRITING OUR IMPRESSIONS

It often happens that if we were to test our knowledge of certain subjects by endeavoring to write out on paper our impressions and convictions, we would completely fail. There is something wrong when we find ourselves in this critical condition, and we should endeavor to find where the trouble is. Some students say: "I know what it is I want to write, but cannot write it." Others will say: "I cannot find words that will express my ideas." Thus many excuses are given.

If we cannot write or tell clearly our impressions and convictions we lack the power to think, to assimilate facts, to give logical form to our ideas. What we need in such a condition is clear perception of what we want to say or write, the power to group our ideas according to their relative importance and lastly the *doing* power. We must all learn how to *do* something; but before we can do, we must think. Success in life is half won when we learn how to think. To overcome this obstacle students should form the habit of questioning themselves about their lessons and the various studies in connection with them. Put your ideas on paper and lay them aside; read them over after they get cold and try to improve them; thus you will gradually find yourself able to express on short notice the ideas you may possess upon a certain subject.

Students should converse with their fellow students about all interesting phases of the art, thus coming in contact with others' thoughts and receiving other impressions will aid them in talking intelligently. You need never expect to become a good thinker until

you become a good reader. Our students lack lamentably this last named habit. They read but a very little on a whole and the books they do read are often badly chosen. Resolve that you will read some every day, if only for five or ten minutes. Read good books that are inspirational and suggestive. If you do not know of them, ask some person older in the profession, for advice as to what books to read.

To encourage the thinking habit we will from time to time give a list of questions that it would do students good to think over and write out answers to. We would be pleased to look over the answers to the set of questions below, if any of our students should forward us the same. Those you cannot answer immediately should be looked up. Thus you will begin to cultivate the habit of investigation which is very necessary. The one sending in the best set of answers will see them printed in *THE NEGRO MUSIC JOURNAL*.



QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS.

1. Did man use the voice in song before he used fingers upon an instrument?
2. What is the art of music? (Give a short, concise definition)
3. Give the full name and the birth-year of the first great musician? (a) Name two of his contemporaries? (b) Name two great forms of composition in which he composed? (c) Were his ancestors musical? (d) Are any of his compositions played today?
4. Name fifteen of the world's greatest composers? (a) Give nationality of each; also name one great work composed by each.
5. Name ten great colored singers? (a) Name five fine colored instrumentalists? (b) Give name and birth of the greatest colored composer? (c) Name two great works composed by him? (d) Which of his works have been produced in America?
6. Give the names of four American colored composers? (a) Have we had any colored women composers of note?

NEGROES AS SINGERS.

Comment.

It is no wonder that the presentation of "Hiawatha" by a chorus of colored men and women of this city was a great success nor that the effect of the music was thrilling. There is a peculiar vibrating quality in the Negro voice, due perhaps to a peculiar arrangement of the vocal chords, which is not found in the white race. Its effect is absolutely unique and indescribable. In some degree this remarkable quality is lessened by cultivation although it is not entirely removed, so that the most striking, even if less artistic, results are obtained from Negroes on the plantation. It is impossible to forget too, the effect produced in one of the Southern tobacco factories by singing of the Negro employes. Out of the silence there will arise a low, crooning sound, generally on a minor key. One by one the other Negroes will join in the song, contributing a harmony that is as rich and penetrating as can be imagined and yet all unstudied and natural. This is the real Negro singing, and it is worth travelling many miles to hear.

Dvorak, the great composer, appreciated the distinctive character of Negro music, for in his symphony, "The New World," he incorporated many quaint and musical motifs which were first heard by him when he went among the plantation Negroes in the far South.

Unquestionably some of this music is as old as the world, for it has been chanted in the wilds of Africa to the accompaniment of rude drum and punctured reed ever since human beings could articulate. It still retains much of its original savagery, and when sung with the peculiar timbre which is the especial attribute of the Negro's voice, it produces an effect which sets the nerves tingling with unwonted feeling. The average "coon song" of the present day bears not the least relation to these *real* Negro melodies, and are only travesties upon the "patter songs" which the plantation Negro loves to sing.

The colored people of Washington have done wisely in banding together the most musical of their race for the presentation of standard musical compositions. It would be worth while, indeed, for them to repeat their entertainment in some theatre. They would, unquestionably, be greeted by an audience not confined to their own color.—THE WASHINGTON POST.



SOME MUSICAL GEMS.

The laws of morality are those of art.—SCHUMANN.

Be what nature intended you for, and you will succeed. Be anything else, and you will be ten thousand times worst than nothing.—SYDNEY SMITH.

Music is Architecture translated or transposed from space into time; for in music besides the deepest feeling, there reigns also a rigorous mathematical intelligence.—HEGEL.

Music is an art. It is a thing of law and order. There is no ineffable mystery and miracle about it which may not be understood by the average man.—W. J. HENDERSON.

One arrives at art only by roads barred to the vulgar; by the road of prayer, of purity of heart, by confidence in the wisdom of the Eternal, and even in that which is incomprehensible.—CHOPIN.

Is it not a fact that children for whom their parents have sacrificed in order to provide for a musical education, are often ingracious in acceding to requests to play for their parents? And yet the very reason for the cultivation of the art should rest first of all in its power to brighten the home life and the humdrum domestic cares.—THE MUSICIAN.

Music may be termed the universal language of mankind, by which human feelings are made equally intelligible to all; whilst, on the other hand it offers to the different nations the most varied dialects, according to the mode of expression suitable to the character of each nation.—LISZT.

Club


Department

Conducted by Miss Agnes Carroll

Under this heading will be given suggestive matter for club-work. Teachers are earnestly entreated to organize clubs among their pupils and excite their interest in the beauty and usefulness of the literary side of the art. This department will be open for the free use of all clubs to put forth their ideas on clubs and club-work. Let us hear from you.

THE MINOR SCALES EXPLAINED.

(CONCLUDED)

YOU may suppose that in as much as authoritative writers have continued to consider the minor to be relative to the major; it is the opinion of most men that the major scale was no doubt first discovered and that the minor grew out of the major. Be this a fact or not this much we can be sure of our minor scales are always built on the sixth of the major. For example let us build the major scale D:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
D	E	F-sharp	G	A	B	C-sharp	D
whole	whole	half	whole	whole	whole	half	

For convenience we will count three degrees below our first D. We will then have B below the treble staff. On this B we will build three forms of the minor scales.

First, the normal minor:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
B	C-sharp	D	E	F-sharp	G	A	B
wh.	half	wh.	wh.	half	wh.	wh.	

This is B normal minor; it takes its name from the tone of the major scale upon which it falls. We have seen that by counting down three, we reach B of the major; this B is also the sixth of our D-major scale, and therefore the key-note of our new minor scale.

Hence when we build our minor scale upon that tone and proceed in the regular order prescribed for the minor scale, say the normal minor, we find that no extra accidentals are necessary for the bringing of the semi-tones in their required places, *viz.* 2-3; 5-6.

Again, we can see that these accidentals are as necessary for the bringing of the minor semitones of B, in their proper places as are the same accidentals necessary for the bringing of the semi-tones of the major scale D in their respective places. For further example, we will now build the harmonic form of the minor scale upon the B.

Before doing so we will repeat our formula. The semi-tones are now to occur between 2-3; 5-6; 7-8. The harmonic form:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
B	C-sharp	D	E	F-sharp	G	A-sharp	B
	wh.	half	wh.	wh.	half	1½	half

In order to comply with our formula it became necessary to place a sharp on our A.

We will now build our last form of the minor scale. The semi-tones are to occur between 2-3; 7-8. The melodic minor:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
B	C-sharp	D	E	F-sharp	G-sharp	A-sharp	B
wh.	half	wh.	wh.	wh.	wh.	half	

We note that in order to make our semi-tones occur between the 2-3, 7-8, extra accidentals are placed on G and A of our present B-minor scale. Thus we have the melodic form of the B-minor scale ascending.

Pay attention to this. I said ascending for in the melodic form our scale is not the same descending. When this form of the minor scale descends, the semitones are between 6-5; 3-2, thus:

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
B	A	G	F-sharp	E	D	C-sharp	B
whole	whole	half	whole	whole	half	whole	

Please do not imagine that you can carry these complicated scales in the memory before having diligently written them out; and thereby compelled yourself to reason and puzzle them out for yourself. These forms are but the formulæ from which you can arrange scales in any of the keys desired.

Violin Department

Conducted by Mr. Clarence C. White

Through this department we hope to unite our many violin teachers and students throughout the country: hence articles and questions bearing upon violin teaching and study are welcomed from all sources.

STYLES OF BOWING.

AS I said in last month's article, we will devote a great deal of this writing to the different styles of bowing. I think each teacher and pupil will admit that a great deal depends upon the bow. After we have learned to draw out a good round tone with the bow, the next thing we attempt is to play two or more notes on the same bow stroke. Sometimes the student finds that after the first tone or first note is produced he hasn't much bow left for the remaining note or notes. So when we begin to take up slur bowing, we must learn to divide our bow into equal parts so that each tone will have the same length of bow. For instance, if we are going to play six notes in one bow, we must divide the bow into six parts and let each of the six tones have the same value. If we wish to play eight notes in one bow we must divide our bow into eight parts, etc. This is the secret of smooth playing. Remember that all the time that you practice this, you must not forget to produce at the same time a good full tone, no matter how many notes you have in one bow.

For the wrist, the practice of short strokes at the point and frog of the bow, is the very best that can be done. When you practice the stroke at the frog, be careful that the elbow is lower than the wrist. Remember that in all methods of bowing, smoothness is the thing to be sought for. Get a firm tone without scratching.

Of the fancy bowings, perhaps the ones to be practiced most are the spicatti and the staccato, as the both require a great deal of practice and explanation, I will take them up separately, later.

After we have mastered to a certain extent the whole-bow strokes we must give some attention to the left hand. We know that the fingers of this hand must be like little steel hammers and the sooner we begin to train them the better. Just the four-finger exercises on the strings will be good exercise for a while, at least until the fingers begin to fall on the strings with some amount of precision. However, as soon as possible I would begin the use of the Schrädick finger exercises and then the Edmund Singer finger studies and it would be well later on to use those excellent finger studies of Sevcik. Sevcik was the teacher of those two technical wonders,—Kubelic and Kocian. His book will work wonders towards strengthening the fingers.

When practicing always stand erect. Let your appearance however be one of grace. Above all other things, *Hold your violin up!* Don't let the violin lie down on your chest. Nothing looks so bad as that and yet it is a common fault of violinists. Teachers should be careful to correct all bad facial expressions on the part of the pupil while the pupil is playing. So many young pupils present a comical exhibition of the muscles of the face while playing. Teachers, watch out for this, for it is a sure sign that some muscle is being drawn tight when it should be relaxed. Study your pupils individually. Always make your work interesting for your pupils. Keep them at the technical part of their study. Don't allow a "pretty little piece" to be taken up too soon. The pupil will thank you for it in the end. Get the pupils to read on musical subjects as well as other subjects. Get them to read the lives of pianists and singers as well as violinists. There will be inspiration in each.

The teacher also should keep strictly "up-to-date" in all matters relative to this great art of ours.

Practice all exercises SLOWLY: that is one great secret of success. Do not forget to drop us a line asking about anything you do not understand, and we will do our best to let you know anything that we can.

Music is God's best gift to man, the only art of heaven given to earth, the only art of earth we take to heaven.—LONDON.

The Child's Musical Life

Under this heading will appear talks and short instructive articles of value to children and those teachers interested in their musical education.

THE WONDERFUL RAIN.

ON reading the story of "The Wonderful Rain" as related by Mr. Thomas Tapper in his work entitled, "The Child's Music World," I wondered if many of our little children keep this story in their minds. Or, it may be some of you do not know of this fable. For the benefit of those who have not read it, I will tell it to you, myself :—

Mr. Tapper tells us that the people of India had a fable of a star named *Svati*; if this star was in the act of ascending when it rained and a drop of water fell into an oyster, the drop which fell into the oyster's shell became a pearl.

This fable goes further, for it says the oysters knew of the star's power and if the rain was falling in *Svati*-time, each oyster would seek to catch the precious drop. If a drop fell into an oyster's shell the receiver of the drop would dive to the bottom of the sea and wait for the precious drop to develop into a pearl.

Now that we all know the fable, can you think out for yourselves some of the reasons the writer had for bringing this story before your minds. Do you think he wanted you to feel that it was through this means that the oysters of India produced their pearls? I am afraid we can find a better reason for his having told us this charming little fable, and our reason will teach our little music folks a lesson.

This is what the writer finds; he tells our little folks that they can first learn from this fable the lessons of watchfulness and desire to learn the opportunity is at hand. For he converts the Indian star *Svati* into our much used word, opportunity. He tells us that those oysters that so eagerly awaited the precious drop to enter their

shell held the place of our dear little ones, whose minds are young and free from care, therefore fresh and pure, hence in a fine condition to begin to grasp after the loftiness of music or the language of sounds, as did the fable have those oysters grasping after the precious drop of rain.

Are you one of those who are young and who have been fortunate enough to have begun taking music lessons? If you are do you value the one drop, which means, do you desire to do your very best? The best you can do will be your precious drop or pearl. Let us hope that you are of that nature. But ah! I can not leave you until I talk with you on that last lesson the oysters can teach us, told us in the action of the fortunate oyster: immediately it received the pearl drop it dived to the bottom of the sea and waited for it to develop. Are our little folks doing this? Are they studying diligently after they have coaxed mama and papa into buying them pianos and securing music teachers for them? Are they hiding themselves from their little playmates for an hour or so each day and patiently studying so that the precious drop,—which is the glorious opportunity mama and papa have blessed them with,—shall develop into pearls. You must now understand this to be the power of giving your parents the pleasure of listening to the sweet sounds you can bring forth from the instrument.

I am sure some of our little folks have not thought so seriously on the subject before—but I am going to stop talking now, for I believe truly that you will repent of the past and do better hereafter.



Worth While.

'Tis easy enough to be pleasant,
 When life flows along like a song;
 But the man worth while is the one who will smile
 When everything goes dead wrong.
 For the test of the heart is trouble,
 And it always comes with the years,
 And the smile that is worth the praise of earth
 Is the smile that comes through tears.

The VAGRANT PHILOSOPHER.

Wilson G. Smith.

I HAVE a vagrant friend who occasionally honors me with his company, and, inspired by the fragrant nicotine of a Porto Rican cigar, dispenses his home-made philosophy to me in copious installments. No matter what subject comes up, he has his opinions regarding it, and in truth he does not often go wide of the mark. Evolution and re-incarnation are his special hobbies, but at times he condescends to regale me with his opinions upon music. One day, not long since, he wandered into my studio, and, under the usual stimulating influence, we discussed music in its legitimate and popular phases. I will endeavor to report, as nearly as possible, some of his ideas upon the prevailing conditions.

"Professor," said he (he always honors me with that title of distinction), "if popular adulation and appreciation are any criterion for judging the longevity of musical ideas, then you must allow with me, that—to parody the Moslem creed—great is the popular composer, and rag-time music is his profit. It is the doctrine of re-incarnation perpetually at work. The same old theme with its vulgar harmonies perpetually bobbing up serenely. Was there ever an original idea in popular music? Well, hardly. It is the same old tune, invented in such remote times that it must be classed as aboriginal rather than original. It antedates the classic in music, and is the nearest thing to perpetual motion that has ever been discovered by man.

"Vulgar sentimentality is its perpetual theme, and it matters not whether it is wedded to the sensuous waltz, the giddy two-step, or the syncopated rag-time, it fulfills its mission and penetrates the sacred precincts of the home of the cultured and the plebeian. But right here let me say that the possession of wealth, with its attendant ease and plentitude of time for do-nothing days, is a greater menace to true culture than the condition which makes bread-winning the paramount issue, and a consequent lack of time for culture and

education. In the first case it is pure atavism, and in the second it is the possession of the little knowledge that makes for bliss.

"Money never implies culture; neither does the lack of it necessitate ignorance. As the sprig is bent, even so does the tree incline; and where you see an honest effort at self-culture, you may be sure that the hand of evolution will at some time bring forth fruit of its kind. The appreciation of the best in art and music, is then, due to the process of culture, either in the person direct, or in his ancestry. The trouble is that too many are willing to accept the legacy of heredity, and enjoy life according to the formula of their progenitors. It all resolves itself into this proposition—shall a man remain in gross ignorance that he may enjoy the commonplace, or by a little culture end it? Shall a man remain a groundling, and with his face to the earth remain oblivious to the magnitude of other worlds in the heavens? Shall he limit his knowledge of life to his own limited horizon, or shall he, by looking abroad, discover that he is but an atom in the vast universe? Literature has its infallible standards, and I never met anyone who dared to dispute the comparative merits of a Dicken's novel and those of the yellow-back variety. Neither have I ever found, in the libraries of the educated, the yellow-back hobnobbing with the works of standard authors. But—and shame to say it—how often do we see upon the pianos of the cultured and supposed-to-be refined, the indecent product of the popular writer in juxtaposition with compositions that have immortalized musical art.

"What is the matter, then, that such conditions obtain? It is the old story of atavism—the crudities of the long past cropping out. The links of the long chain of heredity have not always been perfect. Our duty in life is simply to see that the link which we represent is honestly forged and adjusted. No one will dispute one's right to assert that the dime novel is degenerating and character destroying. Why, then, is it denominated crankism for one to assert that there is a vast gulf between the legitimate in music and the dime novel product that is masquerading under the popular name of 'rag-time?' The music is vulgar and commonplace, and is worse than arrant nonsense. Who would ever think of reading a book of poems compiled from the text of popular songs;

much less would such a collection of hodge-podge find a place upon the library shelves! Why then, should people of more or less culture tolerate such sentimental trash when arranged to music that has in no sense any intrinsic merit? What is the matter with popular taste, when orchestras and military bands of repute play upon the concert stage rag-time songs, and marches with whistling and alleged vocal obligato? It appeals to the galleries, you say. True; but is commercialism the only aspect of art worthy of consideration? Is there not enough music written in the lighter vein to attract the uncultured, without descending to such vulgar tricks? How is the great public to be educated if its educators descend to its level and purvey to its ignorance? I am a so-called crank upon these matters, I admit; but as I said before why should a man be so denominated because he wants to see the public fed upon something besides musical poison? One thing is certain: the voice of the people is not the voice of culture and art. If our forefathers went to bed by candle light, traveled in an ox cart, and ate soup with a steel spoon, it is no sign that we of the twentieth century should repudiate electricity as an illuminating and motive agent, or disdain a silver spoon in the matter of soup consumption.

"We are quick enough to utilize the inventions of a genius in the matter of its practical application to our daily life. Why, then, is it a sin to insist that we appreciate and accept the inventions of just as great minds in the higher branches of art? Some misguided poet has stultified himself by saying: 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise;' but why did he not also add: 'Where wisdom is more blissful, it is a sin to remain in ignorance'? 'Tis a matter of culture versus repression; a problem as to whether a man's duty to man is to make the most of himself and radiate the spirit of advancement, or, by being at a low mental or intellectual level, strive to bring others to his restricted horizon. Let us rather all strive to be cranks, and impress upon others the noble necessity of progress and advancement.—THE CONCERT-GOER.



CHOICE THOUGHTS.

There are seven notes in the scale ; make them fourteen ; yet what slender outfit for so vast an enterprise ! What science brings so much out of so little ? but of what poor elements does some great master in it create his new world ! Shall we say that all this exuberent inventiveness is a mere ingenuity or trick of art, like some game or fashion of the day, without reality, without meaning ? We shall account the science of theology to be a matter of words ; yet as there is a divinity in the theology of the church, which those who feel cannot communicate, so is there also in the wonderful creation of sublimity and beauty of which I am speaking. To many men the very names which the science employs are utterly incomprehensible. To speak of an idea or a subject seems to be fanciful or trifling, to speak of the views, it seems to be childith extravagance ; yet it is possible that that inexhaustible evolution and disposition of notes, so rich, yet so simple, so intricate, yet so regulated, so various, yet so majestic, should be a mere sound, which is gone and perishes ? Can it be that those mysterious stirrings of heart, and keen emotions, and strange yearnings after we know not what, and awful impressions from we know not whence, should be wrought in us by what is unsubstantial, and comes and goes, and begins and ends in itself ? It is not so ; it cannot be. No ; they have escaped from some higher sphere ; they are the outpouring of eternal harmony in the medium of created sound ; they are echoes from our Home, they are the voices of angels, or the "Magnificat" of saints, or the living laws of Divine Governance, or the Divine Attributes ; something are they besides themselves, which we cannot utter,—though mortal man, and he perhaps not otherwise distinguished above his fellows, has the gift of eliciting them.—CARDINAL NEWMAN.



The Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
 So charming left his voice, that he awhile
 Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear.
 —MILTON.



EDITORIAL



A Grand Production of "Hiawatha," by Colored Talent.

That our race is steadily progressing along all lines of education is daily being manifested. In the industrial life, the scientific world, the college curriculum, the artistic sphere, in each is to be noticed with interest the rapid progress of our race. Is it yet to be proven that the Negro's brain is able to comprehend the various arts and sciences? If this be not a fact, for what do such characters as Dunbar, Wheatley, Tanner, Booker T. Washington, Bruce, Coleridge Taylor, Burleigh and others stand for? It is not for us as a race to feel that we are inferior to any race—for the same God created us all: white and black, brown and yellow, out of the same substance. Our all important duty is to THINK and LABOR to prove that we can understand and execute works of art.



One of the most notable events in the musical history of the colored race was the grand and artistic production of "Hiawatha," by the S. Coleridge Taylor Choral Society of Washington, on April 23. This society was organized about two years ago and is composed entirely of colored talent—in fact, some of the best talent in the country is to be found in the membership. It is under the leadership of Prof. John T. Layton, who has taught music in the colored public schools for many years and who has a bass voice that he has used very successfully from time to time in concert work in this city and vicinity. The chorus numbers about one hundred and sixty pleasing voices.

The production of "Hiawatha," (complete) was an artistic and financial success. The large auditorium of Metropolitan Church was filled to overflow with representative people of our race. The sight was a grand one to behold, that large and enthusiastic audience, listening with discriminating judgement to the production of a masterpiece composed by a colored composer and musician. The results proved that the work had been thoroughly prepared and every part was sung with understanding and feeling not often found in a society of its size.

The soloists were Mrs. Cathyrine Skeene-Mitchell, soprano; Mr. Harry Burleigh, baritone, and Mr. Sydney Woodward, tenor. The artists, on a whole, sang their parts creditably. Mrs. Mitchell, in "Spring has come with all its splendor," sang with much spirit and feeling, though her voice is not a robust one which would have better suited that part, she did her work beautifully and her bearing was that of the artist. Her voice would probably give greater satisfaction in a work like "Creation." Mr. Sydney Woodward in the tenor solo, "Onaway! Awake! Beloved!" proved that he is in the possession of a fine tenor voice of ample range, his high notes being made with much ease and clearness. His singing, on a whole, did not show the finish and soul that he is capable of giving an audience. Mr. Burleigh's work from every point of view was masterly done. In the solos, "Wahonomin! Wahonomin!" "Beautiful is the Sun, O Stranger," "'Farewell,' said he, 'Minnehaha,'" "True is all Iagoo tells Us," "I am going, O my People." his rich, robust and musical vocal organ was heard to the best effect. His enunciation, phrasing, breathing, attack and the soul infused in all he sang showed careful study and artistic temperament.

The chorus work was beautifully sung; the attack, blending of voices, tonal quality, enunciation and phrasing pleased and gave satisfaction in most every instance. Prof. Layton conducted with a quiet, thoughtful baton and had the unbiased attention of his forces

throughout the production. A little more enthusiasm here and there through the work might have given a better effect. Mr. Layton deserves great credit for the careful painstaking work given his chorus and they appreciated it by singing their parts with soul and understanding.



Owing to the badly prepared orchestral part, the management of the society had to dispense with the orchestra and use as a substitute two pianos and a vocalion. The orchestra engaged for the occasion was a white one under the direction of Prof. Donch. Mrs. Robert Pelham, Miss May Europe and Mr. William Braxton, the accompanists, proved themselves fully equal to the occasion and the demands made upon their technic and musical conception. That the whole work was produced by colored talent is encouraging and noteworthy.



There is one other feature of the production worthy of notice and that is the support and encouragement given the society by the best white music teachers and music-lovers of the city. It proves that if we try to help ourselves, others will assist us. Among the eminent white musicians that were patrons of the society are to be mentioned Reginald De Koven, Dr. E. S. Kimball, Prof. I. M. Chickering, Edward H. Droop, Percy S. Foster, Mrs. Wm. Bruce King, Prof. H. M. Paul, G. J. Pfeiffer and many others.



The great activity shown by the Washington colored people of late toward the study and appreciation of the better class of music should inspire music-lovers and choral society members to take a new interest in THE NEGRO MUSIC JOURNAL and the work it is endeavoring to accomplish. We appreciate most that about which we understand most: hence it behoves music-lovers and choral and orchestral members to read and study all phases of the musical art.

MUSICAL NOTES

Mr. Harry T. Burleigh, who sang the baritone solos in the production of "Hiawatha," is, besides a singer, one of our best American composers. Several of his songs have been sung in England as well as in America.

All eyes are now centered upon the production of "Aida" by The Theodore Drury Opera Co. at Lexington Opera House, New York, this month. It has been carefully prepared and noted soloists engaged, which should insure its success.

Mr. Clarence C. White has been in Washington for several days and expects to leave soon for a tour of the Eastern and Western sections of the country. This enthusiastic young artist is fast gaining a national reputation as a violinist.

Miss Myrtle Hart, Harpist, assisted by Miss Ida A Burrell, Soprano, Mrs. Ida E. Chestnut, Contralto; Mr. Stanley C. Gilbert, Baritone, and Mr. Henry Robinson, Pianist, were heard at Odd Fellows' Temple, Philadelphia, Pa., April 23. The concert is reported as being an artistic success.

The children of the District of Columbia enjoyed a grand treat in being given the opportunity to hear "Hiawatha" produced by the S. Coleridge Taylor Choral Society on the evenings preceding and following its night of production. The small fee of ten cents admission was charged and the children evidently received great inspiration from listening to this grand creation so beautifully sung.

The successful production of "Hiawatha" by the S. Coleridge Taylor Choral Society should encourage the musical talent of other cities to band together for the musical elevation of the race. We will never learn to know, love and appreciate the best music unless we hear it often well performed. Those musicians of ability, who are asleep, need to awaken and gather available forces together for the study and production of the larger musical forms,—the cantata, oratorio and symphony.

The following interesting program was rendered at the Organ Recital given at St. Augustine's Church, Washington, D. C., April 19: Concert Overture in C-minor, Hollins; Andantino in Db, (Lemare), Mr. H. H. Freeman; Heavens are Telling, (Haydn), St. Augustine's choir; In Paradisum, (Dubola) Miss Mary Mulaly; Romanza, 2nd Concerto. (Wienlawski) violin, Mr. Anton Kaspar; Fugue in G-major, Op. 87, No. 2, (Mendelssohn), Pastoral-Waeks, Postlude in Eb, (Wely) Mr. H. H. Freeman; Chorus, Tannhauser, (Wagner). Agnus Dei, (Haydn), St. Augustine's Choir; Cavatine, (Bohm), violin, Mr. Anton Kaspar; Route D' Om; hale (Saint Sam), Mr. John Porter Lawrence; Tannhauser Overture, (Wagner), Mr. John Porter Lawrence. An address touching upon music and its influence was delivered by Dr. Stafford.